Import of wheat

758. SHRIMATI HEMA MALIN1: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what has compelled Government to import around 10 lakh tonnes of wheat inspite of enough stock to meet the domestic demand;

(b) whether Government is aware that presently global wheat prices are soaring and there is no sign of reversal;

(c) the cost at which Government has imported 10 lakh tonnes of wheat;

(d) whether it is a fact that Government would have to pay twice as the price of imports than Government paid to domestic farmers;

(e) whether public sector companies would be allowed to import wheat; and

(f) if so, the details of those companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) During 2006-07 and 2007-08, 53.79 lakh tons and 18.44 lakh tons respectively of wheat was imported to meet the requirements of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other Welfare Schemes of the Government as procurement fell short of the estimated requirement.

However, in view of the good progress in procurement of wheat during 2008-09 which was sufficient to meet the requirement of targeted public distribution system and other welfare schemes run by the Government, Government took decision in May 2008 not to import wheat during 2008-09. Further, no decision has been taken to import wheat during 2009-10 for the Central Pool.

(b) During the last six months the price of wheat (US Soft Red Wheat) in the international market has been more or less stable.

(c) The weighted average price of wheat imported during 2006-07 and 2007-08 was US $ 205.34 per ton and US $ 366.83 per ton respectively.

(d) to (f) Since Government has decided not to import wheat, hence, the questions do not arise.

Procurement of wheat

759. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat procured by FCI and private parties during this season from wheat producing States, separately in each case, the price paid by FCI and the private parties per quintal of good quality wheat in each State, if varies; and

(b) to what extent the central pool of wheat has been augmented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The State-wise procurement of wheat by Food